

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USSS-00

DRC-01 AF-10 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 /167 W

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R 091045Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1149

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS, BG, LY, EG

SUBJECT: REACTION TO MIDDLE EAST FIGHTING

1. BDG OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS FROM PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER ON DOWN UNIFORMLY HAVE CONDEMNED ISRAELI "AGRESSION" AND EXPRESSED TOTAL SUPPORT FOR ARABS. MAULANA BHASHANI HAS CALLED FOR NATIONWIDE HARTAL (GENERAL STRIKE) OCTOBER 12 IN SUPPORT OF ARABS. IN SEPARATE MESSAGES OCTOBER 7 TO PRESIDENTS OF EGYPT, SYRIA, AND LIBYA, MUJIB CONDEMNED ISRAELI AGRESSION AND EXPRESSED THE FULL SUPPORT OF 75 MILLION BENGALLEES FOR ARAB PEOPLE IN THEIR JUST STRUGGLE. SAME DAY FOREIGN MINISTER KAMAL HOSSAIN AT GDR NATIONAL DAY FUNCTION ECHOED MUJIB AND SAID THAT ISRAEL MUST VACATE OCCUPIED TERRITORY AS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE LONG-STANDING MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. PRESIDENT CHOWDHURY REPORTEDLY BLAMED ISRAEL'S "POLITICAL OBDURACY" AND CONTINUED OCCUPATION OF TERRITORIES FOR EXPLOSIVE SITUATION THREATENING WORLD PEACE.

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2. IN JOINT STATEMENT, AWAMI LEAGUE OFFICIALS

CONDEMNED ISRAEL'S "NAKED ATTACK" AND CALLED ON BIG POWERS AND UN TO INFLUENCE ISRAEL TO STOP THE WAR. LEADERS OF AWAMI LEAGUE, NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY/MUZAFFAR, AND CPB AND AFFILIATED YOUTH AND STUDENT GROUPS ISSUED SIMILAR STATEMENTS, ALL STRESSING THEME OF IMPERIALIST CONSPIRACY AGAINST ARABS AND SOME CITING THE UNITED STATES SPECIFICALLY. OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES, ONLY NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY HAS REFRAINED FROM PUBLIC COMMENT. SEVERAL NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS NOTED REPORTS OF SIXTH FLEET MOVEMENT AND ALLUDED TO GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY. ONE COLUMNIST TREATED AS FACT THE RUMOR THAT MUJIB HAD OFFERED TO SEND FREEDOM FIGHTERS AS TOKEN OF SOLIDARITY.

3. COMMENT: THERE ARE NO SURPRISES IN BENGALIEE REACTION. MAULANA BHASHANI, HOWEVER, WITH HIS FINE POLITICAL INSTINCT FOR POPULAR ISSUES, MAY HAVE STOLEN THE PLAY FROM MUJIB. IN OCTOBER 8 PRESS CONFERENCE, THE MAULANA CALLED ON BDG TO EXTEND ALL POSSIBLE AID, INCLUDING TROOPS AND FOOD, TO THE ARABS, EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO LEAD A MUJAHID BAHINI (HOLY WAR FIGHTING FORCE) TO THE MIDDLE EAST, AND ASKED PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF RELIGION TO PUBLICLY PRAY FOR ARABS ON FRIDAY. HE URGED BDG AND OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES TO COOPERATE WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN MAKING THE HARTAL OCTOBER 12 A SUCCESS. TURNING TO STANDARD POLITICAL TARGETS, THE MAULANA ASKED INDIA TO SEND MILITARY SUPPORT TO THE ARABS, SAYING THAT MERE CONDEMANATION OF ISRAEL WAS NOT ENOUGH, AND ALLEGED THAT THERE WAS CLEAR EVIDENCE OF US IMPERIALISTS BEHIND THE ISRAELIS. GIVEN THE SUPPORT OF THE GENERAL POPULATE FOR THE MUSLIM ARABS IN THIS WAR AND THE FACT THT BHASHANI HAS CALLED FOR A HARTAL ON A FRIDAY IN RAMADAN, IT IS LIKELY THAT HARTAL WILL BE SUCCESSFUL. BDG WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ATTACK BHASHANI'S MOTIVES THIS TIME.
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